

Search for a COVID-19 test means sold-out signs, long lines

By JIM MUSTIAN, JEFFREY COLLINS and CANDICE CHOI

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP)—President Joe Biden promised to distribute hundreds of millions of free COVID-19 tests and to open more testing sites to fight surging infections, but the stepped-up efforts will not come in time for people who want to find out if they are infected before the holidays.

Americans have been searching drugstores for scarce home tests or waiting hours in chilly temperatures at testing facilities across the country.

"Not everyone can take three hours off work to get tested, but it feels like it's the only thing we have the power to do," said Jordan Thomas, who waited near-

ly four hours for a test this week in the Brooklyn borough of New York City.

In Atlanta, drugstores ran out of home tests, and police shut down testing sites as traffic backed up a half-mile or more. A drive-thru testing site in Columbia, South Carolina, that for months had quicker lines than some nearby Chick-fil-A restaurants had waits of an hour or more days before Christmas. Workers warned that results could take longer than the typical 24 to 36 hours.

Fueling the surging demand for tests is a mix of factors, including families seeking to keep holiday gatherings safe and people needing to prove they are virus-free for travel, work or school.

Continued on next page



People wait on line to get tested for COVID-19 on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2021, in New York.

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Continued from Front

Adding to the pressure is the extra-contagious omicron variant, which has a multiplying effect on the number of people seeking tests after being exposed to an infected person. In the United States, infections average around 149,000 a day, up from 75,000 a day at the start of November. "The rise in infections is pretty dramatic," said Gigi Gronvall, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Pub-

lic Health who has tracked COVID-19 testing efforts during the pandemic. Testing can help ensure safety at gatherings, even if people do not have symptoms and were not exposed to the virus, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Take a test before you gather," the agency's director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, said this week as omicron led to spiking cases ahead of the holidays. But efforts to follow that

guidance and to meet the requirements of some employers and schools have strained testing capacity in many places. Detjon Bushgjo-kaj was among hundreds of people seeking a test in Everett, Massachusetts, just north of Boston. He waited about 90 minutes after his 6-year-old daughter, who has not been vaccinated yet, tested positive after falling ill with a fever. "As soon as my wife called, I left work and came right here. I work with a lot of people and in differ-



Employees of Nomi Health check in a long line of people for COVID-19 tests, Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2021, in North Miami, Fla.
Associated Press

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ent places so I needed to make sure," said Bushgjo-kaj, who is vaccinated. He said his daughter's illness has added uncertainty to their holiday break. In New York City, drug-stores posted signs alerting customers that they sold out of tests. Lines wrapped around blocks at some testing sites, with some saying results could take three to four days. For next-day results, one site listed a price of \$150. For results in two hours, the price was \$389. Though the technology to process PCR lab tests takes

less than a day, testing sites and labs face staffing struggles like many other businesses, said Mara Aspinall, who teaches biomedical diagnostics at Arizona State University and is on the board of OraSure, a COVID-19 test maker. Manufacturers are working to increase supplies. Abbott said it's seeing "unprecedented demand" for its popular BinaxNOW tests and that it plans to expand production to 70 million tests in January, up from more than 50 million this month. □

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Season's Greetings! The Aruba Today Newspaper announces that due to the holidays, we will not be in circulation on Saturday, December 25th, 2021 or Sunday, December 26th, 2021. We will be back on newsstands everywhere bright and early to serve our readers and advertisers on Monday, December 27th, 2021.

From the team at the Aruba Today Newspaper and the entire staff at Caribbean Speed Printing (CSP), have a healthy, safe and Happy Holidays. □

U.S. has reunited 100 children taken from parents under Trump

By BEN FOX

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Biden administration effort to reunite children and parents who were separated under President Donald Trump's zero-tolerance border policy has made increasing progress as it nears the end of its first year. The Department of Homeland Security planned Thursday to announce that 100 children, mostly from Central America, are back with their families and about 350 more reunifications are in process after it adopted measures to enhance the program.

"I would have loved to have this happen much more quickly. But we are making progress and I feel like we're gaining momentum," said Michelle Brané, executive director of the administration's Family Reunification Task Force. President Joe Biden issued an executive order on his first day in office to reunite families that were separated under the Trump administration's widely condemned practice of forcibly separating families and children at the U.S.-Mexico border to discourage illegal immigration. The work of the task force has been complicated by a number of factors, including inadequate or missing records on the separated families, the sheer number of cases and the fact that



A group of migrant families walk from the Rio Grande, the river separating the U.S. and Mexico in Texas, near McAllen, Texas, March 14, 2019.

Associated Press

many parents are in remote Central American communities and were unable to track down their children or get to the United States to retrieve them. In September, the task force had reunited 50 families when the administration announced a partnership to speed up the effort with the International Organization for Migration and the creation of a web portal — Juntos.gov or Together.gov — for parents to contact the U.S. government and work through the reunification process. About 5,500 children were forcibly removed from their parents under Trump, most-

ly in 2018, as his administration sought to stop an increase in people crossing the U.S.-Mexico border with criminal prosecutions, even if the migrants were presenting themselves to authorities to seek asylum as permitted under the law. Amid widespread condemnation, including from Republicans, Trump stopped the practice in June 2018 just days before a judge ordered an end to the program in response to a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union. Brané said in an interview ahead of Thursday's announcement that officials believe there are still

about 1,150 children whose whereabouts have not been confirmed. The total fluctuates as some cases are resolved with new information and new ones emerge, including some who have reached out through the new web portal. "Obviously, this is nowhere near the end," Brané said. "This is just the beginning of

this ramp up and hopefully families will see that reunifications are happening and they will feel confident coming forward." Parents and children, including some who arrived at U.S. airports this week, are being granted humanitarian parole to reside in the country for a minimum of three years and may pursue permanent status through asylum or another program. They are also receiving counseling services. Hundreds of families have also filed lawsuits against the federal government. The Justice Department last week told lawyers representing several groups families that it was withdrawing from settlement negotiations, after eight months of talks, and would defend each case in court. That came after media reports of a proposed settlement that would include payments of several hundred thousand dollars to each affected person sparked outrage among Biden administration critics in Congress and elsewhere. □

Forecasters: New Mexico should brace for worsening drought

By SUSAN MONTTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — The last three months have been very dry in New Mexico and it's only going to get worse. That's the word from forecasters with the National Weather Service and other climate experts in the state. They said during a meeting this week that New Mexico reservoirs continue to be far below historical averages and that ranchers are bracing for a winter with little moisture out on the range. Some snow is expected in the higher elevation on Christmas Eve, but it will be less than the precipitation that has helped to ease drought conditions elsewhere in the West in recent weeks. Parts of California are in line for even more

snow, but the latest drought map shows nearly half of the western region is still dealing with the most severe categories of drought. Andrew Mangham, a senior hydrologist with the weather service in Albuquerque, shared a series of maps that showed chances are good for above-normal temperatures and below-normal precipitation for the next two weeks, the next month and into April. "Really the story is we had a dry year that is getting worse and worse as we move through this second La Niña," he said. The benefits of a decent monsoon over the summer have all but evaporated and most of New Mexico missed out on any meaningful moisture in the fall, Mangham said. □

Holiday Opening Hours

Dec 24:	9:00am - 3:00pm
Dec 25:	Restaurants open Stores are closed
Dec 26:	5:00pm - 10:00pm
Dec 31:	9:00am - 3:00pm
Jan 1:	Restaurants open Stores are closed

*Individual stores and restaurants opening hours may vary

A gift of Christmas joy for the children of the incarcerated

By **LUIS ANDRES HENAO and MARIAM FAM**

Associated Press

Kevin Almestica recalls unwrapping a Christmas present at age 5 to find his favorite G.I. Joe action figure with a card from his mom who was serving time at New York City's Rikers Island jail complex.

"That brought me great joy thinking that she was thinking of me," said the 27-year-old Florida-based photographer.

Almestica's gift was sent by the Angel Tree program of Prison Fellowship, a non-profit which partners with churches and volunteers to host toy drives and deliver gifts to children on behalf of their incarcerated parents. It's part of an effort by some faith groups and congregations to bring Christmas cheer -- and connection -- to prisoners and their kids.

Angel Tree, Almestica said, helped strengthen a bond with his mother, who died when he was young.

"When I got that gift, it kind of restored that hope that my mom still loved me," he said.

His mom didn't want him to grow up in the foster care system and asked a woman who was volunteering with Prison Fellowship to raise him, Almestica said. Today, Almestica sponsors kids in the program so they can also get presents.

Angel Tree was founded in the 1980s by Mary Kay Beard, a bank robber who, while imprisoned in Alabama, noticed how inmates would sometimes give their kids toothpaste, soaps or socks for Christmas.

"She realized that if she could find some volun-



teers on the outside who would purchase and deliver Christmas gifts to her children and the children of her colleagues in prison, that she could create a very wonderful experience," said James Ackerman, president and CEO of Prison Fellowship, which expanded the program nationwide.

The program works with prison chaplains to reach inmates interested in sending gifts to their children. After collecting information on their preferred toys, they send this wish list to thousands of churches that collect donated gifts. Some churches organize Christmas parties where volunteers deliver gifts to children with personalized notes from their incarcerated parents.

"We read these notes and they're like, 'Merry Christmas, sweetie, I love you so much. I miss you. I know I'll see you soon. And don't forget to brush your teeth every night,'" Ackerman

said.

Kids also get children's Bibles and can sign up for Christian summer camps.

The program can be crucial for parents, said Johnna Hose, who has volunteered for Angel Tree since her release from prison in 2010.

"While I was incarcerated, it was a great feeling knowing that my kids...knew that they weren't alone, knowing that there is this inspiration and learning about God," said Hose, who works for a drug addiction treatment center in California. Her children received presents through her local church and attended summer camp.

"Any kid wants to know that their parent is thinking about them at Christmas time," she said.

Jessica Lopez-Hermantin recalls wondering whether she would ever speak to her father again after he went to prison. Angel Tree gifts were "an affirmation of my dad's love, my dad's

constant thinking of me," she said.

But the 33-year-old says the presents should be part of a larger effort by incarcerated parents to have a relationship with their children. In her case, her dad -- who now works for Prison Fellowship -- would tell her Bible stories during prison visits; talk to her about school, boys, sports and music; take interest in the books she was reading; and remember some classmates' names.

"Little things like that...make the difference," she said. "The Angel Tree gift is just the icing on the cake."

The Salvation Army also has a program that sends Christmas gifts to children on behalf of their incarcerated parents in Minnesota and North Dakota. The initiative -- separate from the Christian organization's own Angel Tree program for low-income families -- resumed this year after being canceled last year due to the pandemic, though

it's limited to North Dakota for now because of coronavirus restrictions.

"For the inmate, Prison Toy Lift provides a dignified way for the parent to be part of their child's life at a very important time of the year," said Brian Molohon, executive director of development for The Salvation Army Northern Division. "It is a tangible expression of love from the incarcerated parent and truly brings joy to the kiddos who might otherwise have only a painful memory of their parent's absence."

The prison ministry at the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church delivered Christmas cards that were signed by members of different congregations and sent for inmates. The cards included messages of encouragement.

"Christmas is a tough time of the year for a lot of people," said the Rev. Marilyn Schneider, the ministry's coordinator. "But if you're locked up and you don't get to be with your family and friends or anyone from your life on the outside, and then someone reaches out and says, 'Hey, we're thinking about you. We're praying for you. We care about you. God loves you' -- it really, I think, has an impact." Schneider caught a glimpse of the project's impact in a letter sent by a woman who once received one of the cards.

"I can't explain what that personalized card meant to everyone; you could just feel the mood lifting up," Schneider quoted the letter as saying.

"Someone who doesn't even know me thought of me." □

Universal Orlando reinstates mask rule as COVID cases rise

By **ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON**

ORLANDO (AP) — Universal Orlando is reinstating its mask requirements beginning Christmas Eve as COVID-19 cases are surging as a result of the omicron variant.

Daily cases of coronavirus have quadrupled in the past week in the state of Florida, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Con-

trol and Prevention. Hospitalizations have increased by 12%, the CDC says.

But one of the largest hospital networks in Miami, Jackson Health, has reported twice as many COVID-19 patients on Thursday than it had a week ago.

Universal Orlando says masks will be required at all public indoor lo-

cations and at all attractions from the moment guests enter the lines to when they leave. A lot of lines for rides and shows in the resort theme parks start in outdoor areas.

The resort has seen a busy holiday season with popular rides this week reporting waits of up to three hours.

The requirements will be for guests and employees regardless of vaccination status and will cover restaurants, shops, and indoor hotel public areas.

Walt Disney World earlier this year relaxed its face covering rules to require them only indoors, and has not announced any decision to revise their policy. □

Putin to the West: 'It is not us who threaten anyone'

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin urged the West on Thursday to "immediately" meet Russia's demand for security guarantees precluding NATO's expansion to Ukraine, saying the U.S. is "on the threshold of our home."

Speaking during a marathon annual news conference, the Russian leader welcomed talks with the U.S. that are set to start in Geneva next month as a "positive" move, but warned that Moscow expects the discussion to produce quick results.

"We have clearly and precisely let them know that any further NATO expansion eastward is unacceptable," Putin said.

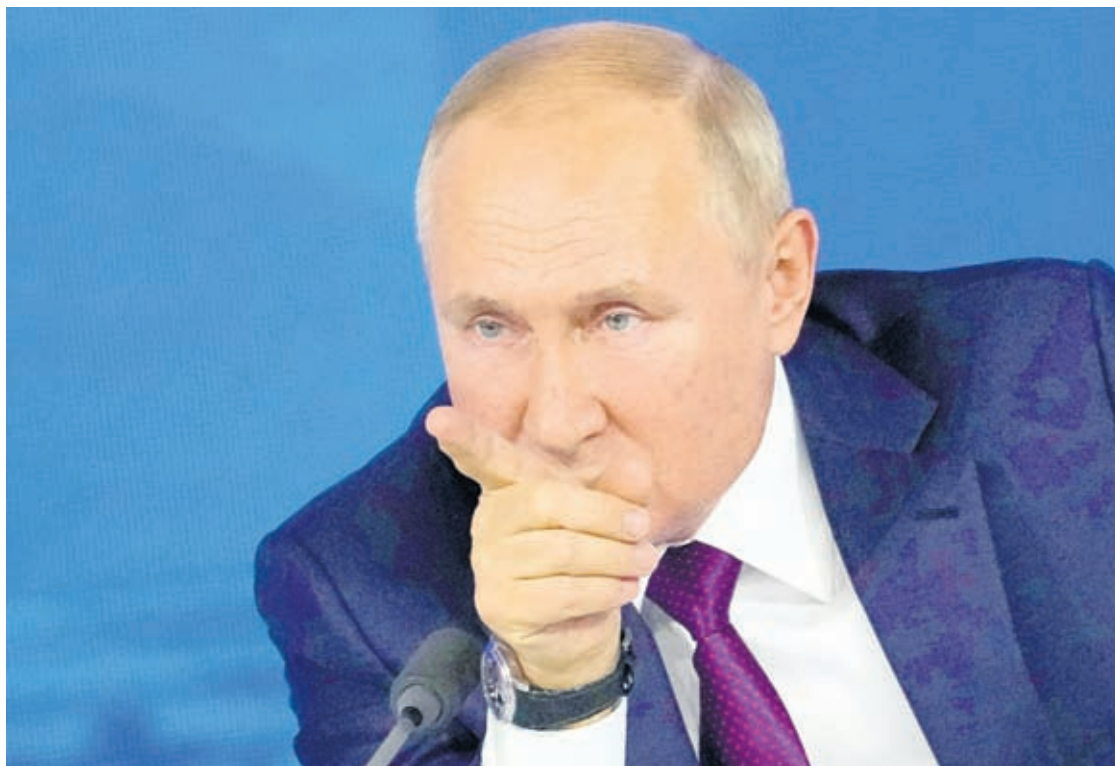
Last week, Moscow submitted draft security documents demanding that NATO deny membership to Ukraine and other former Soviet countries and roll back the alliance's military deployments in Central and Eastern Europe. A key principle of the alliance is that membership is open to any qualifying country.

"Is it us who are putting missiles near the U.S. borders?" Putin said angrily. "No, it's the U.S. who came to our home with its missiles, they are already on the threshold of our home. Is it some excessive demand not to place any strike weapons systems near our home?"

Moscow presented its demand amid soaring tensions over a Russian troop buildup near Ukraine that has stoked fears of a possible invasion. U.S. President Joe Biden warned Putin in a video call earlier this month that Russia will face "severe consequences" if it attacks Ukraine.

Russia has denied plans to launch an attack but has described a NATO expansion and weapons deployment in Ukraine as a "red line."

Asked Thursday if he could provide a guarantee that Russia will not invade Ukraine, Putin snapped in response: "It's you who must give us guarantees and give them immediately,



Russian President Vladimir Putin gestures while speaking during his annual news conference in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Dec. 23, 2021.

Associated Press

now, and not have idle talk about it for decades."

"How would the Americans respond if we put our missiles on the U.S. borders with Canada or Mexico?" he exclaimed.

The U.S. and its allies have said they won't give Russia the kind of guarantee on Ukraine that Putin wants. American officials are conferring with European allies in advance of the Geneva talks.

The Russian leader charged during his news conference that the West had "swindled, blatantly cheated" Moscow by offering verbal pledges in the 1990s not to expand NATO's presence east and then enlarging to incorporate former Soviet bloc countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet republics in the Baltics.

"They said they wouldn't expand, and then they did expand," he said. "They said there would be equal guarantees for all, but there is no equal security. It seems to me sometimes that we live in different worlds."

Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic joined NATO in 1999, followed in 2004 by Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the former Soviet republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In subsequent years, Albania, Croatia, Monte-

negro and North Macedonia also joined, bringing NATO's membership to 30 nations.

"It's not us who threaten anyone," Putin said. "Is it us who came to the U.S. or British borders or somewhere else? No, they have come to us, and now they

say that Ukraine will be in NATO. Or they will just put bases and strike weapons there on a bilateral basis."

He accused the West of trying to make Ukraine "anti-Russia, constantly beefed up with modern weapons and brainwashing the population."

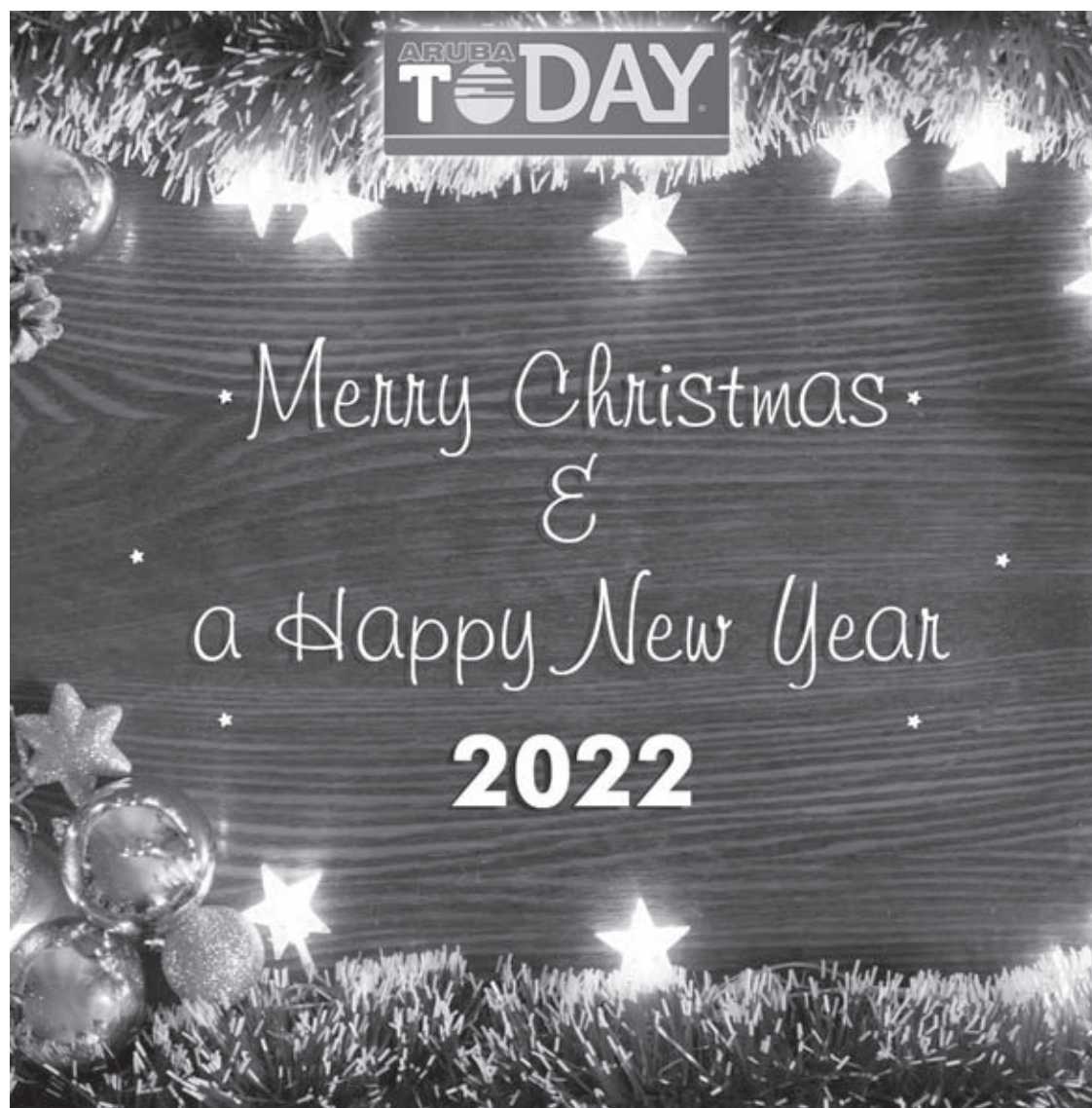
Russia can't keep living in anticipation of looming security threats posed by possible deployment of Western weapons in Ukraine, Putin said.

"Should Russia live constantly looking back at what's going on and what new weapon systems are put there?" he exclaimed. "We need to think about ensuring our security."

He argued that Western weapons could encourage hawkish forces in Ukraine to attempt to regain control over Russia-backed separatist regions by force and even try to reclaim Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014.

The Russian leader claimed that Western expressions of concern about an alleged Russian invasion could be a prelude to a possible attempt by Ukraine to launch an offensive against the rebels in the east following two botched attempts in the past.

"There is an impression that they are preparing a third military operation and warning us not to meddle," he said. □



American ex-priest in East Timor found guilty of sex abuse

By **DAVID dos SANTOS GUSMAO**

OECUSSE, East Timor (AP)

— A defrocked American priest accused of sexually abusing orphaned and disadvantaged young girls under his care in East Timor was found guilty Tuesday and sentenced to 12 years in prison, in the first case of its kind in the staunchly Catholic nation.

Richard Daschbach, 84, who spent decades as a missionary in the country's remote enclave of Oecusse, faced charges of child sexual abuse as well as child pornography and domestic violence.

The trial began in February but was postponed several times before concluding last month. During the proceedings, victims complained about threats and online attacks. Daschbach maintains strong backing from some, including former President Xanana Gusmao, who went to the court on Tuesday. East Timor is the most Catholic place outside the Vatican and Daschbach is revered for his role during the tiny Southeast Asian nation's



Richard Daschbach, a former missionary from Pennsylvania, is escorted by a police officer upon his arrival for a trial at a courthouse in Oecusse, East Timor on Feb. 23, 2021.

Associated Press

fight for independence.

The church and foreign donors who once supported Daschbach's shelter said he confessed to the abuse, but the former priest and his lawyers have at various times refused to comment. They did not make their legal strategy public and court proceedings were closed.

Daschbach, the son of a Pittsburgh steelworker, was ordained in 1964 by the Society of the Divine Word at its headquarters outside of Chicago. He arrived in the country now known as East Timor several years later, setting up a shelter in the 1990s named Topu Honis, which means "Guide to Life."

Hundreds of children passed through the shelter under Daschbach's care. More than a dozen females came forward with abuse claims, but only nine were registered in the case due to legal technicalities. The Associated Press spoke with five of the accusers. They recalled their experiences in vivid detail, saying Das-

chbach kept a list of young girls on his bedroom door and that every night one of those girls would sit on his lap, surrounded by a ring of children and staff members praying and singing hymns before bed.

They said the girl on his lap would then sleep with him that night and that various types of abuse — from oral sex to rape — would occur, sometimes involving other children too. The accusers have not been identified because of fears of retribution.

Daschbach's lawyer, Miguel Faria, said they are disappointed with the court's verdict and plan to appeal the decision issued by the three judges.

"Evidence provided by the shelter matron and former students who lived in the orphanage were ignored by the court," Faria told reporters, alleging that some accusers changed their statements made earlier to authorities in Oecusse after being taken to the capital, Dili, and the new statements became the sole basis for the judges' decision. □

U.S. Navy says it seizes arms from Iran likely bound for Yemen



In this Dec. 21, 2021, photo released by the U.S. Navy, illicit weapons seized from a stateless fishing vessel in the North Arabian Sea are arranged for inventory aboard guided-missile destroyer USS O'Kane's (DDG 77) flight deck.

Associated Press

By **ISABEL DEBRE**

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The U.S. Navy said it seized a large cache of assault rifles and ammunition being smuggled by a fishing ship from Iran likely bound for war-ravaged Ye-

men.

U.S. Navy patrol ships discovered the weapons aboard what the Navy described as a stateless fishing vessel in an operation that began on Monday in the northern reaches of the Arabian Sea off Oman and

Pakistan. Sailors boarded the vessel and found 1,400 Kalashnikov-style rifles and 226,600 rounds of ammunition, as well as five Yemeni crew members.

It's just the latest interdiction amid the grinding war in Yemen that pits Iran-backed Houthi rebels against a Saudi-led military coalition. Western nations and U.N. experts repeatedly have accused Iran of smuggling illicit weapons and technology into Yemen over the years, fueling the civil war and enabling the Houthis to fire missiles and drones into neighboring Saudi Arabia.

Iran denies arming the Houthis despite evidence to the contrary. In an unusually pointed move, the statement late Wednesday from the Navy's Bahrain-based 5th Fleet blamed Iran for sending the weapons, saying

the boat was sailing along a route "historically used to traffic weapons unlawfully to the Houthis in Yemen."

"The direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of weapons to the Houthis violates U.N. Security Council Resolutions and U.S. sanctions," the statement added.

Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the interception.

U.S. Navy patrol ships transferred the confiscated weapons to the guided-missile destroyer USS O'Kane before sinking the fishing vessel because of the "hazard" it posed to commercial shipping. It said the Yemeni crew would be repatriated. American seizures of arms bound for Yemen's war, typically Kalashnikov rifles, machine guns and rocket-propelled grenade launchers, began in 2016 and

have continued intermittently. Yemen is awash with small arms that have been smuggled into poorly controlled ports over years of conflict.

The Navy's 5th fleet said it has confiscated some 8,700 illicit weapons so far this year across the 2.5 million-square-mile area it patrols, including the strategically important Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

Yemen's war erupted in 2014, when the Houthis seized the capital of Sanaa and much of the country's north. Saudi Arabia, along with the United Arab Emirates and other countries, launched a bombing campaign months later to restore the internationally recognized government and oust the rebels.

The war has killed some 130,000 people and spawned the world's worst humanitarian disaster. □

Chile's tattooed president-elect honors homeland in ink

By PATRICIA LUNA
Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — When Gabriel Boric is sworn in as Chile's president he'll not only be the youngest to lead the South American country but also the first in Latin America to sport several tattoos.

The question is whether he'll openly display them.

One person hoping he does is Yumbel Góngora, the self-proclaimed "tattoo dissident" who inked the three elaborate designs that fill Boric's arms and back with sweeping imagery from his native Patagonia region.

"It's important that a person never forgets their roots. That always keeps you focused on where you are and what's important ... not get lost in the fame," Góngora told The Associated Press while taking a break at her parlor in downtown Santiago decorated with artwork containing feminist slogans.

Boric, 35, scored a historic victory in Sunday's runoff over a one-time admirer of Donald Trump after campaigning on a promise to attack the nagging poverty and inequality that he and leftist supporters argue is the unacceptable underbelly of a free market model imposed decades ago by the dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

Since his days as a student protest leader, Boric has made a career of flouting conventions. He shunned the traditional suit and tie when he was elected to congress in 2014 and instead wore rock band T-shirts, jeans and once even a Mohawk, all the while drawing the ire of traditionalists.

"I couldn't care less," he said at the time, dismissing the conventions as "a tool of the elites to distinguish



A tattoo of a lighthouse set on the Strait of Magellan decorates the arm of then presidential candidate Gabriel Boric during a rally in Santiago, Chile, Monday, Nov. 1, 2021.

Associated Press

themselves from the low people."

But he adopted a decidedly more conformist look in the run up to Sunday's runoff election — still no tie, but a dark sport coat, dress shirts and well-groomed beard — to court more conservative Chileans on edge about voting for an untested millennial who counts among his supporters Chile's Communist Party. Góngora said she studied old maps of Chile for months in coming up with the first tattoo she designed for Boric nearly a decade ago: a map of the ice-capped islands and labyrinthine fjords near where both grew up in Punta Arenas, at the tip of the South American continent.

Later, she designed two more: a lenga tree twisted into knots by the strong southern winds and an end-of-world lighthouse shining into emptiness that Boric had carved into his left arm during a battle with depression.

"A lonely Magellan light-

house among the stormy and mysterious seas of southern Patagonia," Boric said in a 2018 social media post showcasing Góngora's body art. "I'm going to live there one day but in the meantime it lives with me." Góngora, whose dyed green hair, piercings and tattoos are something of a walking advertisement for her university-trained artistry, said Boric always stood out among her urban hipster clientele because of his humility — something she attributes to his upbringing far from the capital.

But she felt betrayed by her fellow activist when in November 2019 he negotiated a deal with allies of President Sebastian Pinera to put an end to nationwide protests in exchange for a commitment to hold a plebiscite on rewriting the Pinochet-era constitution. It was a risky political decision that at the time cost Boric the support of hardliners like Góngora, who identifies as a "anarchist-feminist."

Like huge numbers of often apathetic Chilean youth, she nonetheless voted for Boric in the runoff, fearing his conservative opponent — José Antonio Kast — would be a major setback for women, indigenous rights and Chile's LGBTQ community.

In her binder sits the sketch for yet another tattoo for Boric — its design a secret — that the two discussed a while ago. With the demands of his new job and the future of Chile riding on his shoulders, she doesn't know if she get to ink it, though.

"I'd hope he doesn't stop being a rocker," Góngora said. "But I don't know if that will fly in politics. Then again, nobody ever expected such a young president." □

Pasco an Aruban Christmas story of faith

By Etnia Ntiva

ORANJESTAD — At the beginning of December's nights we live the magic of Pasco in Aruba through fabulous decorations of lights that glows in the streets, being best expressed by the well-known Sero Preto or Black hills dwellings in San Nicolas, but it was not always like that.

Back in the mid-1700s, there was no electricity; however the people of Aruba were waiting for Christmas with excitement and certain traditions. Weeks before Christmas, the Arubans began cleaning and painting their homes. An old custom was also to tie three aloe leaves with a bright red ribbon and hang that amulet over doors and windows

to welcome the spirits of peace and harmony in each home. Typical dishes were enjoyed among the family: Christmas ham, ayaca, goat stew, stuffed turkey and olie bollen (a Dutch tradition). They drank chuculati di pinda which is hot milk with peanuts mix and creme punch.

Aruba's families go to the

Aurora Mass to demonstrate their Christian faith. It is called 'Aurora' because it is celebrated at the dawn of the new day. The blessed dawn, the divine sun light of the East that we waited for has appeared and will no longer be hidden in our lives.

Christmas in Aruba would not be complete without

a visit to see the Christmas Lights around the island. By just driving around on the main roads you can enjoy a variety of creativity with colorful lights being displayed on various Aruban homes. Also the majority of the roundabouts are decorated.

If you are lucky enough you might hear Christmas carols and "gaitas" at any of these locations but also at the malls and stores. Gaita is a style of Venezuelan folk music from Maracaibo in Zulia State. It is possibly derived from gaites, the Gothic word for goat, the animal whose skin generally is used for the membrane of the furro instrument (kind of tambura with stick). Other instruments used in gaita include maracas, cuatro, charrasca and tambora (Venezuelan drum). Song themes range from humorous and love songs to protest songs. The local gaita bands are composed mostly of a group of ladies who sing with angelic voices while they dance in a choreographic manner. □



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Aruba to me..... Christmas Edition

ORANJESTAD — You are here for Christmas or New Year and we would like to portrait you! Send a Christmas and Happy New Year greeting to your loved ones, friends or colleagues back home.

Complete the sentence: Holiday Greeting from Merry Aruba to Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.

com and we will publish this between December 22nd and 31st. Isn't that a special way to show your loved ones that even though you are far apart you are still close at heart everyday.

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Lauren Baes



Salvador Villaluz

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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

Here are some holiday greetings from our beloved readers and followers

Salvador Villaluz

"Buddy, Giancarlo (Canada) and Karla (Mexico) traveled to the World Series of Poker Aruba until December 19, but we have enjoyed Aruba so much that we have extended our stay past Christmas".

"Merry Christmas to our families and friends. Joyeux Noel. Feliz Navidad.

While the North American countries have many thousands of COVID-19 daily cases, Aruba is comparatively safer. I have the Grand Slam of the four recommended vaccines, including the Pfizer booster and flu vaccine, along with wearing the recommended KN95 masks. I look forward to the New Year's Eve dinner, fireworks and celebrations in Aruba."

Lauren Baes

"Holiday Greeting from Merry Aruba to all our family and friends in Nashville!." From the Baes Family

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An unforgettable dining experience awaits you at Tierra del Sol



NOORD — Imagine dining with a panoramic view surrounded by the golf's greens, the island's rugged north coast and the mesmerizing blue ocean in a relax dining experience, delighted in fresh cuisine with Caribbean, European and American flavors. Inspired by nature the restaurant is letting in the outside while the menu reflects what guests are looking for nowadays: variation, adults & younger diners choices, great prices with a friendly service. That is the great thing about the re-opened casually elegant restaurant at Tierra del Sol: it is for everyone and every occasion!

The Restaurant at Tierra del Sol transformed into a place of light, fresh looks, elegant though laid-back setting and the choice between inside and outside dining. Those two areas flow into each other in a natural way. Families with children dine on the big tables, some business people take a quick bite inside and a group of golfers enjoy a meal after their game. It is a fantastic concept that is accessible for all without losing its essence: great food in a stylish interior design overlooking the spectacular view.

Lunch with unmatched views

Guests praise Tierra del Sol restaurant for



the magnificent views making it a popular lunch spot as well as a great after-golf lunch experience. Locals and visitors have been coming for years to Tierra del Sol to unwind and let go in this elegant yet laid-back setting. Savoring some handhelds delicacies such as Crispy Chicken Caesar Wrap, Fish or Steak Tacos or a Classic Burger are just a few to mention and for those Pizza and Pasta lover's they have a great selection of dishes as well.

Divine Dining

Tune in for a culinary experience that will give dining another perspective. We are not talking about the standard 3-course menu, but about a journey through taste-land. The Restaurant at Tierra del Sol invites you to taste as many items as you wish from their extensive dining menu.

Fresh Oysters, Escargots, Flash seared Tuna Tataki, Beef Carpaccio, Cheese and Charcuterie Board or TDS Wedge Salad are only some of the welcoming dishes. For the main courses you can enjoy the Fresh Catch of the day, Caribbean Seafood, Filet Mignon, Lobster Thermidor, Korean Pork Chop, Vegan Bowl or Fettuccini Truffle Carbonara among others. Top it off with a sweet surrender of a caramel flan, New York Cheesecake or Chocolate Mousse are one of the choices.

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Wait, whom should we tip for the holidays — and how much?

By **LAURA MCMULLEN** of **NerdWallet**

You're likely planning to give some extra love to family and friends this time of year. But what about your dog walker or babysitter? If you haven't already, consider showing appreciation for your service providers with a gift or bonus gratuity.

After all, now is the time to "say 'thank you' and wish people well for the next year," says Lizzie Post, who hosts the "Awesome Etiquette" podcast and is based in Burlington, Vermont.

The kind sentiment around gifting and tipping is clear, sure, but the specifics can be confusing. How much do you give, and to whom? And what if the idea of shelling out more cash around the holidays turns your insides to eggnog?

You'll find answers to these questions below, but first, let's discuss timing. There's no need to get your tips, gifts and notes delivered by Christmas, and it's fine if you missed Hanukkah or are running behind on Kwanzaa. Shoot for some time around the new year.

WHO SHOULD RECEIVE GIFTS OR EXTRA GRATUITY?

Show your generosity to providers you see consistently — at least four or five times throughout the year, says Crystal L. Bailey, director of The Etiquette Institute of Washington (in D.C.).

These are typically people "who you developed a



Travelers use the self-service kiosk to check in and pay for luggage at the American Airlines terminal, Thursday, April 29, 2021, in Miami.

Associated Press

closer professional relationship with, whose services you greatly appreciate," she adds.

So, if you get your hair cut by whoever is available and don't know their name, don't worry about a gift or extra gratuity. But, if you're a regular client of a specific hairdresser, and they know just how to do your 'do, consider showing some year-end generosity.

Gifts or tips may also be appropriate for child care professionals, teachers, housekeepers, personal trainers and dog walkers. "That list is going to be a little different for everybody," Post says.

So think about who's regularly helped you out — like the apartment super if

they've had to unlock your door several times.

WHO GETS GRATUITY, AND HOW MUCH?

Tip people whom you pay directly. For example, say you typically give a provider cash or pay electronically with a card swipe or an app like Venmo or PayPal. Bailey says it's fine to use the same payment methods to leave them a large year-end tip.

How much to tip depends on your finances and what you're comfortable giving. Bailey suggests tipping up to the amount of a single service. So, if your every-other-month massage is \$75, she says, "I'd tip them \$25, \$50 or up to that \$75." Or, she says, double your

typical tip.

However much you give, put that money in a card "with a note of your gratitude," Post says.

WHO GETS GIFTS, AND WHAT KIND?

Gifts and gift cards are better for providers you don't pay directly. You wouldn't give your kid's teacher cash, for example, but Bailey says a gift card would be fine. For extra credit, go with a gift card for a nearby coffee shop or restaurant, she adds, which makes the gesture more personal and supports a local business. Consumables can make good gifts, too, according to both Bailey and Post. A plate of cookies, for example, works particularly well

as a shareable group or staff gift.

If you make those cookies yourself, Post suggests including a list of ingredients or common allergens, like nuts.

Try to avoid gifts that take up a lot of space, Bailey says, as well as personal items, such as clothes or scents.

WHAT IF I CAN'T AFFORD TIPS AND GIFTS?

All this year-end generosity isn't meant to break your budget, Post says. And while these tips and gifts are customary, she says, "they're not guaranteed bonuses."

If giving all this money is stressful (or not feasible), Post suggests you "breathe, and think about your own life and what works for you."

Maybe you give no tips or gifts this year. Or perhaps you give to only a few providers. In that case, "prioritize who has really been invaluable to you this year," Post says.

Words can go a long way, too, she adds. Always write a note, whether you tip someone or not. If you typically give a large year-end tip but can't afford it this year, Post suggests briefly explaining that in the note. Otherwise, your provider may wonder if they did something wrong.

For the rest of the note, Post says, don't overthink it. Thank the provider for their wonderful service, she says, and wish them well for the year ahead. □

Yuengling accuses Bud Light of trampling on trademark

By **MICHAEL RUBINKAM**
Associated Press

A trademark tiff between America's oldest beer maker and America's best-selling beer brand appears to be over before it really began.

Last week, D.G. Yuengling & Son, the nearly 200-year-old Pennsylvania-based brewer, demanded that its much larger rival, Anheuser-Busch, stop using a tagline for its forthcoming Bud Light Next zero-carb beer,

noting it closely resembled one already trademarked by Yuengling.

"Get ready for the next generation of beer," read the Dec. 14 post from Bud Light's Twitter account, according to a screenshot provided by Yuengling. The same graphic appeared on Bud Light's Instagram and Facebook accounts that day, Yuengling said.

Yuengling quickly objected, pointing out its own low-carb brew — Flight, in-

troduced in February 2020 — is marketed as the "next generation of light beer." Yuengling registered that phrase with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office more than a year ago.

The brewer poked fun at Bud Light, tweeting an image of a cartoon burglar — masked and suspended from a rope — pilfering Flight's catchphrase. "We know imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, but this is going a bit too far,"



In this Feb. 21, 2020 file photo, Yuengling's new upscale light beer, Flight, is seen on tap with Yuengling's other beers at D.G. Yuengling & Son's Mill Creek brewery in Pottsville, Pa.

Associated Press

Yuengling tweeted at Bud Light.

And then Yuengling got se-

rious, sending the St. Louis-based beer giant a cease-and-desist letter. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 36 Viscounts'

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singing 38 Soft

style leather

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peninsula 40 Difficult

9 Treated trip

roughly 41 Casino

11 Squirrel's figure

find

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creator

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for change

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serve

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sharp

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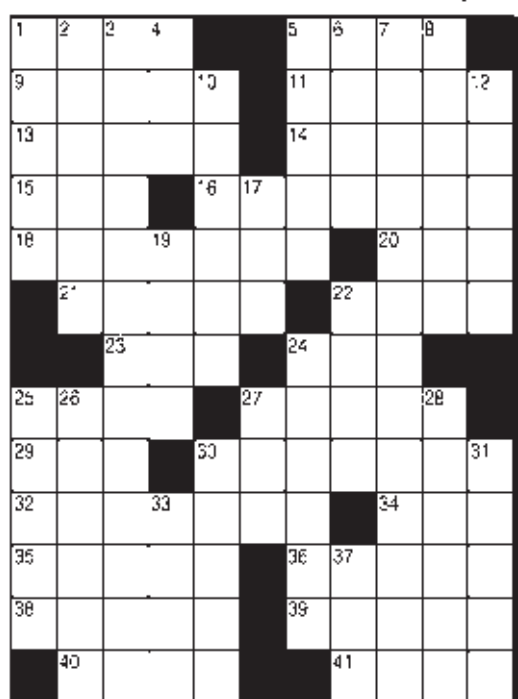
31 Annoying

ones

33 Slacker

address

37 In the past



12-24

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is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's. X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-24

CRYPTOQUOTE

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R K H N R K L I V N I V E .

— SWLORE DREA I

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: THE TWO MOST JOYOUS TIMES OF THE YEAR ARE CHRISTMAS MORNING AND THE END OF SCHOOL — ALICE COOPER

Denzel Washington's aging Macbeth is one for the ages



This image released by A24 shows Denzel Washington in a scene from "The Tragedy of Macbeth."

Associated Press

By JOCELYN NOVECK

AP National Writer

His hair is graying. His nerves are fraying. Denzel Washington's Macbeth is a man quite literally running out of time — even before he meets those witches.

At 66, Washington is certainly at the older end of the spectrum of conceivable Macbeths. But it makes wonderful sense: In Joel Coen's brilliantly imagined, brilliantly executed "The Tragedy of Macbeth," we confront a man who knows in his bones — his aching bones — that the witches' prophecy has given him his last chance to be what wants, no, deserves! King of Scotland.

For an actor of Washington's unique skill set, not to mention facility with Shakespearean verse, Macbeth at any age would be right, frankly. But there's something wonderful about the fact that it took this long, with all the experience and seasoning Washington now brings to bear. Still, this isn't simply a matter of an actor meeting a role at the right time.

No matter how cursed or unlucky the so-called "Scot-

tish play" is in theater lore, the stars seem to be aligned here. First, the movie stars: As Lady Macbeth, Frances McDormand is a perfect partner to Washington in age (64) and every other way, adding her signature clear-eyed urgency — and a few legendarily icy stares — to an often caricatured role. And boy, do these two look right together. Maybe it's true, as somebody said, that the Macbeths have the only good marriage in Shakespeare — though the bar is not high. (Those teenagers Romeo and Juliet had a very short one.)

Completing the dream trio is director Coen (McDormand's husband, in his first solo outing without brother Ethan), creating an austere and chilling yet gorgeous and stylish cinematic universe. It's a world in black and white and gray, full of fog, shadows and mist — a chiaroscuro vision that seems half real, half fantasy.

Designer Stefan Dechant's set, built onto sound stages, is populated by Brutalist-type structures, high walls, long corridors and tall staircases and dirt paths

outside. The key sensation is emptiness: There seems barely a prop around except for swords, doing their vicious work. It feels vaguely medieval but unconnected to a specific period — and thankfully not 2021, either.

Most strikingly, Coen and superb cinematographer Bruno Delbonnel present a film literally wrapped in a box, in what they call an academy-ratio square frame.

As befits the bard's briefest tragedy (albeit with a long list of murders most foul), Coen's film clocks in well under two hours. We begin, as we should, with the three witches, and the ominous "fair is foul, and foul is fair" line — meaning all is not what it seems, an understatement of Shakespearean proportions. In a terrific creative decision, Coen gives us only one actor, the wonderful veteran Kathryn Hunter, as a shape-shifting contortionist who morphs at will into three identical figures.

Despite a few judicious cuts, the language is preserved and the story is, of course, the same: After the witches prophesize that Macbeth will become king, he decides, propelled by the tough-love urgings of his wife ("When you durst do it, THEN you were a man") to hasten the process by murdering much-loved King Duncan (Brendan Gleeson, excellent).

Washington's Macbeth, who often speaks in a soft voice — even a whisper — is racked with indecision beforehand. But what if we fail, he asks. "We fail?" his wife replies, but in McDormand's reading, it's essentially, "Look at us, what the heck do we have to lose?" (Don't answer that, folks.)

And so the bloody cycle begins. This "Macbeth" is, as always, about politics, power, and the corrosive effects of ambition. It is not, however, about sociopaths. It feels more about mediocrity — and the desperation that brings — than monstrosity. □

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24/7

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for children?



Associated Press Illustration/Peter Hamlin

By LAURAN NEERGAARD
AP Medical Writer

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for children?

Yes, U.S. regulators authorized Pfizer's vaccine for younger children after millions of 12- to 17-year-olds already safely got the shot, the only one available for children in the country.

More than 5 million children ages 5 to 11 have gotten a first dose since early November, and government safety monitoring has not uncovered any surprise problems.

This age group gets kid-size doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, a third of the amount used to vaccinate everyone 12 or older. The Food and Drug Administration cleared the shots based on a study showing the kid-size doses were

91% effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19. The 5- to 11-year-olds developed virus-fighting antibodies as strong as those of teens and young adults who got regular doses, with similar or fewer annoying reactions such as sore arms, fever or achiness.

The FDA assessed the safety of the kid-size doses in 3,100 vaccinated youngsters. Regulators deemed that enough data, con-

sidering the trove of safety information from hundreds of millions of larger doses given to adults and teens worldwide.

Very rarely, teens and young adults given the Pfizer vaccine or a similar one made by Moderna experience a serious side effect, heart inflammation, or what doctors call myocarditis. It's mostly in young

men or teen boys, and usually after the second dose. They tend to recover quickly, and after intense scrutiny U.S. health authorities concluded the vaccine's benefits outweigh that small risk.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is looking into a handful of reports of heart inflammation, mostly mild and brief, among 5- to 11-year-olds since vaccinations of that age group began. □

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Tight AFC North prepares for wild finish to regular season

OWINGS MILLS, Md. (AP) — The postseason is arriving early for the AFC North. That's how Baltimore offensive lineman Kevin Zeitler sees it, at least.

"I'd say every week from here on out is a playoff game," said Zeitler, a 10-year veteran now playing for his third AFC North team. Welcome to the NFL's perfect storm of parity. The co-leaders of the AFC North — Baltimore and Cincinnati — are also just a game ahead of last-place Cleveland. Sandwiched between in third place are the Pittsburgh Steelers, who would be part of that first-place deadlock if not for a tie against what was then a winless Detroit team.

Nobody in the AFC North is below .500. In fact, nobody's been below .500 since Pittsburgh was 2-3 after Week 5. There's another division — the AFC West — with everyone at .500 or better, but Kansas City has a two-game lead atop that group, which could make the finish a bit less suspenseful.

No such problems in the AFC North, where each team will play two of its last three games within the division. And the four remaining non-divisional matchups are awfully compelling: Browns-Packers and Steelers-Chiefs this week, followed by Bengals-Chiefs and Ravens-Rams on Jan.



Baltimore Ravens quarterback Tyler Huntley, right, rushes for a touchdown past Green Bay Packers inside linebacker Krys Barnes (51) and defensive end Dean Lowry (94) in the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 19, 2021, in Baltimore.

Associated Press

2. In Week 18, the Steelers visit Baltimore and the Bengals play at Cleveland. If not for that Pittsburgh tie against the Lions, a four-way deadlock at 9-8 would be a remarkably realistic scenario. "If you've been doing this for a while, obviously rookies won't understand, but really you just got to get in, right? You got to peak at the right time," Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger said. "And I'm not saying we're peaking or we're close to it, but we're winning the games that we, you know, are the

close games or we're coming back, we're fighting. So we know that there is a little bit of life and we'll just keep fighting one week at a time."

Maybe we should have known something was up after Week 2, when all four teams in the AFC North stood at 1-1. Since then, Baltimore has held at least a share of the division lead after every week, but when the Ravens have had sole possession of it, it's never been by more than a game. Now, a three-game Baltimore losing streak has helped the Bengals (8-6)

pull even.

The Ravens (8-6) play at Cincinnati this weekend with the winner taking over first place alone.

"We know we have a great challenge this week," said Zeitler, who is in his first season with the Ravens after playing previously for the Giants, Browns and Bengals. "They're playing very well. We're going to have to give it everything we've got to take care of business."

The situation in the AFC North is an extreme version of what's been happening all around the league.

There are 27 teams still with a mathematical chance to win the Super Bowl. That equals the most in NFL history with three weeks left in the regular season.

This is only the second season in AFC history (the other was 2002) in which 13 teams have .500-or-better marks through 15 weeks.

"The whole AFC feels like it's kind of a jumbled mess at times," Roethlisberger said. "I think our division could be argued as one of the toughest in the NFL, and so we're constantly beating each other up."

Pittsburgh (7-6-1) has that tie against Detroit to look back on with regret. Cleveland (7-7) also could be in a tie for first if not for a last-second Las Vegas field goal that beat the Browns on Monday night.

The Steelers and Browns are both underdogs this week, and since Baltimore and Cincinnati can't both lose, a defeat would be costly for Pittsburgh or Cleveland. The urgency is obvious for those teams. Then again, a loss would be a huge setback for anyone in this division at the moment.

"Try and go to 10-7. That is the goal," Browns defensive tackle Malik Jackson said. "We understand the position we are in. We understand we need to start helping ourselves, get some wins and put ourselves in the postseason." □

Salazar's lifetime ban upheld by SafeSport Center



Alberto Salazar watches a training session for the World Athletic Championships at the Bird's Nest stadium in Beijing, Aug. 21, 2015.

Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Track coach Alberto Salazar's appeal of his lifetime ban for sexual misconduct was rejected by the U.S. Center for SafeSport in the latest, and likely final, defeat of his once-storied career.

The 63-year-old Salazar was handed the lifetime ban in July, but appealed the case. His entry in the SafeSport database was updated this week to "permanent ineligibility," signaling the appeal had been rejected.

The SafeSport center does not reveal details of its investigations. In 2019, a handful of run-

ners, including Mary Cain, Kara Goucher and Amy Yoder Begley, revealed that they had been emotionally and physically abused while working with Salazar as part of the Nike Oregon Project team.

In January 2020, SafeSport temporarily banned Salazar, and that was made permanent in July 2021.

Cain has sued Salazar and Nike. Among the allegations is that he made her step on a scale in front of other people and would criticize her if her weight wasn't at a certain level. The coach has denied wrongdoing.

Earlier this year in a separate case, the Court of Arbitration for Sport upheld a four-year ban for a series of doping-related violations that occurred while Salazar was training Olympians with the Nike project.

Shortly after that decision, Nike shut down the running team.

Salazar won the Boston and New York Marathons in the early 1980s and went on to coach a number of Olympic medalists, including Mo Farah and Galen Rupp. None of Salazar's former runners have been charged with doping violations. □



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Nets say they have enough players, set to play on Christmas

NEW YORK (AP) — The Brooklyn Nets have enough players to fly to Los Angeles and play their Christmas showdown against the Lakers, though Kevin Durant might not be among them. Coach Steve Nash said Thursday that James Harden has cleared the NBA's health and safety protocols, but he said the Nets don't expect any of their players still in the protocols to come out in time for the game. That would include Durant, the NBA's leading scorer.

The Nets have had their last three scheduled games postponed — among the NBA's nine postponements thus far — when a coronavirus outbreak left them with a league-high 10 players in protocols. Nash said Harden, Paul Millsap and Jevon Carter had also cleared protocols, though rookies Cam Thomas, Kessler Edwards and David Duke Jr. had since entered.

Teams need a minimum of eight players to start a game. Nash said the Nets have more than enough to do that.

But it's unclear if they will have another practice before the game Saturday. Nash said it's only in the last day that healthy players have been able to return to the practice facility for individual workouts.

"It's tricky," Nash said. "We haven't been able to do a lot, but we do what we can and we'll continue to just adapt as the rules and mandates come in."

Entering Thursday, based on team injury reports or similar disclosures, there were 96 players from 23 teams dealing with a virus-related issue — often a positive test, though not always.

The list included stars such as Giannis Antetokounmpo, Luka Doncic and Trae Young. All three are scheduled to be part of the



Brooklyn Nets guard James Harden (13) drives against Atlanta Hawks guard Kevin Huerter (3) during the second half of an NBA basketball game Friday, Dec. 10, 2021, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

NBA's five-game holiday schedule.

It is important to note that players can enter and exit the health and safety protocols list quickly in some cases, some teams do not release updated numbers except when mandated by league rule and not everyone on the list has tested positive for COVID-19.

Durant was placed in protocols last Saturday along

with Kyrie Irving, a day after the Nets said they were bringing the point guard back to play in road games. There's still time for him to return two negative tests 24 hours apart to be cleared, though Nash said the Nets weren't expecting that.

With the Lakers' Anthony Davis already sidelined with a sprained left knee, Durant's absence would

remove another superstar from what was expected to be one of the marquee games of the regular season when it was scheduled. The Nets have the best record in the Eastern Conference, but Nash said it's going to be difficult to pick up where they left off after not playing for a week.

"We're one of the few teams around that league that's had a pause, so to jump back into the rhythm of the league is a difficult task," he said. "But we have to approach it with excitement and opportunity, and also not put too much pressure on ourselves to re-enter."

Along with Durant, starters LaMarcus Aldridge and DeAndre' Bembry remain in the protocols, along with Bruce Brown, James Johnson and rookie Day'Ron Sharpe. Nash said all of the players were experiencing nothing more than mild symptoms. □

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